



June 14, 2013

### **House Passes FY 2014 Defense Authorization Act**

Today, the House of Representatives passed the FY 2014 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), to ensure that our military has the resources necessary to protect our country. Specifically, the bill authorizes \$552.1 billion for the Department of Defense and other critical national security programs. In addition, the bill includes a number of policy provisions concerning weapons acquisitions and procurement, Department of Defense organization and management, and education and training.

Recognizing the service and sacrifice of the members of our Armed Forces, the House-passed authorization includes a 1.8% pay raise for servicemembers and rejects proposals to increase or establish new TRICARE fees. The NDAA also includes long overdue changes to combat sexual assault in the military and ensures that those who have committed such heinous crimes are brought to justice and held accountable. Specifically, the NDAA would strip commanders of their authority to dismiss a finding by a court martial or from reducing guilty findings to a lesser offense, establish minimum sentencing guidelines, and provide additional support services and protections to victims of sexual assault.

Our troops are giving their best to America and it is our responsibility to provide them the resources they need to defend our nation. As the debate over the FY 2014 NDAA moves forward, I will continue to work to ensure that our defense policy meets the national security challenges facing our country and provides our servicemembers the care and support they have earned.

### **Rep. Miller Co-Sponsors Bill to Ensure Veterans Receive Timely Health Care**

We owe a significant debt to the men and women of our Armed Forces. While we will never be able to repay them for all that they have sacrificed for our country, our government has a responsibility to live up to the promises made to those who have valiantly served our nation. While the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has set goals for providing primary and specialty care appointments for our nation's veterans, far too often the Department has fallen short, with veterans oftentimes waiting over a month to be seen at a VA medical facility. In fact, a recent report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office determined that long wait times and inadequate scheduling processes continue to hinder veterans' access to timely and needed medical care.

To address this issue, I recently co-sponsored H.R. 241, the Veterans Timely Access to Health Care Act, which would require the VA to ensure that veterans seeking primary care or specialty care, including mental health treatment, receive an appointment within 30 days. Under this legislation, the Secretary of the VA would be required to submit semi-annual reports to Congress with an assessment of the Department's performance in meeting this standard. I will continue to advocate for this important legislation's passage and will work with my colleagues to ensure that we honor our commitment to our nation's veterans.